



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 9, 2021

The Honorable Rochelle Walensky
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Walensky,

We write to request the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide further guidance on “test-to-stay” models for responding to COVID-19 infections in schools. Current CDC guidance recommends quarantining close contacts of individuals infected with COVID-19 regardless of test results. Under test-to-stay models, when someone tests positive for COVID-19, their close contacts are given daily rapid tests instead of quarantining. If that close contact tests negative, they may remain in school. This approach adheres to the currently available science and data on COVID-19 transmission in schools and is the best way to limit learning loss due to COVID-19.

Many parents and educators throughout our districts have expressed their frustrations with the current quarantine guidance. Quarantining students who are not infected with COVID-19 creates unnecessary logistical challenges for parents and results in considerable learning loss for students. Most quarantined students miss five to seven days of school. Data from Erie and Niagara counties in New York show only about 1.5% of isolated close contacts end up testing positive for COVID-19. This means most students who have thus far been quarantined in Western New York did not in fact need to stay home.

The data is clear that test-to-stay works. A study of secondary schools in the United Kingdom found the model saved in-person school days while still successfully identifying and isolating positive cases. In Utah, a pilot version of test-to-stay saved over 100,000 days of in-person instruction for roughly 60,000 students, according to a May 2021 CDC report. Utah and Massachusetts are now successfully implementing this model and other states are planning to follow suit.

Our children have lost far too many days of in-person learning since March 2020. The CDC’s own guidance notes up front that students benefit from in-person learning and that safely returning to in-person instruction in the Fall of 2021 is a priority. Now that we have the science and data to manage this virus, we owe it to our children, parents and educators to ensure we are maximizing in-person learning.

Sincerely,



Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress



Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor



Mariannette J. Miller-Meeks, M.D.
Member of Congress



Burgess Owens
Member of Congress